(c) the steps proposed to be taken to ensure that proper funds are provided for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (SMT. SHEILA KAUL): (a) to (c) The VIII plan allocation for the Urban Transport Consortium Fund has been Rs. 4.60 crores. The fund was primarily intended to meet the planning and implementation requirements of urban transport projects through feasibility studies and equity/loan participation.

The annual allocations by the Planning commission for the aforesaid purposes have been increased during the last three years and Rs. 17.20 crores has been spend during the first three years of the VIII Plan. In addition, a provision of Rs. 9 crores has also been made for 1995-96. The requirements would depend on the pace of development of different projects for which studies had been commissioned/ conducted and no specific target for the fund has been fixed.

Propagation of Low-Cost Building Materials by Government.

*330. DR. ISHWAR CHANDRA GUPTA: Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS & EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken to propagate the use of low-cost building materials, based on local resources and waste;

(b) whether Government propose to supply the low-cost materials through the Nirman Kendras (building centres);

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether abnormal rise in the cost of cement during the last six months has hampered the housing activities; and

(e) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to reduce the cost of cement?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (SMT. SHEILA KAUL): (a) one of the main goals of the National Housing Policy is to promote the use of appropriate and energy-saving building materials and cost-effective construction technologies. In order to achieve this goal, a series of steps have been proposed in the National Housing Policy. The following specific steps have been taken to implement the policy directive:—

(i) A Building Materials and Technology Promotion Council (BMTPC) has been set up at the national-level for the selection, extension and promotion of proven technology and building materials and the use of materials conforming to affordable standards and quality construction.

(ii) A national network of Building Centres has been established with a view to providing cost-effective and innovative technology and training and upgrading the skills of artisans.

(iii) Some of the proven low-cost technologies have been incorporated in the national standards and specifications laid down by the Central Public Works Department (CPWD). The State agencies have been advised to incorporate these in their schedules of specifications.

(iv) With a view to promoting the production and use of building materials based on agricultural/ industrial wastes like flyash, phosphogypsum, red mud, etc., financial incentives, viz., excise duty and customs duty exemption/ concession, have been extended.

(v) The entire range of building materials produced by various Building Centres included in the national network are eligible for excise duty exemption.

(vi) Certain other basic incentives, such as free supply of flyash, allotment of land near the source of generation of flyash at concessional rates and terms, have also been provided.

(vii) The Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) is providing both equity support and term loan to building material manufacturing units using agricultural/industrial wastes, etc. The National Housing Bank (NHB) is providing equity support to such units.

(viii) HUDCO and the NHB have been using their financial leverage while approving the housing schemes in different parts of the country to

persuade housing agencies to incorporate low-cost buidling materials and construction techniques appropriate to their regions.

(ix) HUDCO also extends architectural design and consultancy services to the housing agencies which are keen to use cost-effective and appropriate construction techniques in their schemes.

(b) and (c) Government has no plans to undertake the supply of low-cost building materials through the Building Centres. However, as autonomous organisations, these Centres are free to undertake such activities on their own initiative. Higher Central Government grant (limited to a maximum of Rs. 5 lakhs) is available to the Centres undertaking such commercial activities.

(d) There has been a rise in the cost of production of cement due to increase in input and overhead costs, hike in freight rates, etc., and this is one of the reasons for increase in the cost of construction, impacting housing activities.

(e) There is no statutory control on price and distribution of cement. and Prices in different markets are determined by market forces. However, Government is providing necessary support, such as allocation of coal, railway wagons, etc., on priority basis, for increasing production and despatch of cement from surplus to deficit areas in order to strengthen the market mechanism for checking abnormal increase in prices.

Scheme of Infrastructural Development in MEGA Cities

*331. SHRI O.P. KOHLI Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS & EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a new Centrally sponsored scheme, called Scheme of Infrastructural Development in Mega Cities, has been introduced from the year 1993-94;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) how much money has been paid by the Centre for the development of cities under the Scheme city-wise during 199394, 1994-95 and so far in 1995-96;

(d) whether no funds have been given to Government of Delhi under the Scheme during the above period; and

(e) if so, the reasons thereof and the steps taken to release the money to Government of Delhi?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (SMT. SHEILA KAUL): (a) Yes, Sir;

(b) The details of the scheme are as follows:—

(i) The Scheme is administered through the Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment and is applicable to Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore and Hyderabad.

(ii) Funds will be channelised through a nodal agency at the State level, Central and State Government would contribute in the ratio of 25 : 25 as grant, and the balance 50% is to be met from external sources.

(iii) The nodal agency will constitute a revolving fund and will provide finance to various implementing agencies, based on project appraisal by lending institutions, and adopting a judicious mix of grants and loans. The objective is to create and maintain a fund for development of infrastructural assets on a sustained basis.

(iv) Urban sector projects eligible for funding include water supply sewerage, drainage, sanitation, land development, solid waste management, etc. Long-term capital intensive projects will not be covered under the scheme.

The mix of projects will include remunerative, user-charge based and basic services projects.

(vi) the project proposals are to be cleared by a sanctioning committee constituted at the State level including Central Government representatives.